

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 272150Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9262

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 0525

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, NZ

SUBJECT: REACTION TO SUTCH VERDICT

REF WELLINGTON 0464

1. SUMMARY-SUTCH CASE CONTINUES TO HAVE HIGH DEGREE OF INTEREST DESPITE JURY'S NOT GUILTY VERDICT. POLITICAL LEFT, OF COURSE, SEES VERDICT AS INDICATION THAT SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIS) HAD MADE SUTCH VICTIM OF A WITCH HUNT. MORE GENERAL OPINION SEEMS TO BE THAT SUTCH WAS OBVIOUSLY UP TO SOMETHING BUT PROSECUTION FAILED TO PROVE WHAT THIS MIGHT BE. IN THIRTY MINUTE EXCLUSIVE TELEVISION INTERVIEW FEB 26 SUTCH APPEARED TO BE EITHER A FOOL OR A CHARLATAN AND DID MORE TO DAMAGE HIS REPUTATION THAN WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY WEEK-LONG TRIAL. END SUMMARY.

2. WITH SUTCH TRIAL OUT OF THE WAY, POLITICAL LEFT NOW OUT TO OBTAIN REVISION OF OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT (OSA) AND TO DISCREDIT SIS. AT CABINET LEVEL, DEPUTY PRIME
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MINISTER TIZARD (WHO CRITICIZED SIS SHORTLY AFTER SUTCH

ARREST) PRAISED THE JURY FOR NOT BEING "STAMPEDED" INTO A GUILTY VERDICT. TIZARD SAID PROSECUTION OF SUTCH WAS PEACETIME TRIAL UNDER WARTIME LEGISLATION. PRIME MINISTER ROWLING, OBVIOUSLY UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM HIS LEFT WING, TOLD REPORTERS IN PARIS THAT REVISION OF OSA WAS ONE ITEM AMONG MANY THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO LOOK INTO AFTER HIS RETURN TO WELLINGTON.

3. BY FAR THE MOST STIDENT COMMENTS HAVE COME FROM THE RADICAL-INTELLECTUAL LEFT, SOME OF IT WITHIN AND SOME WITHOUT THE LABOUR PARTY. APPROACH OF THIS GROUP HAS BEEN TO THE FACT THAT SIS IS REPRESSIVE ORGANIZATION OUT TO ENFORCE, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE CIA, REPRESSIVE LAW. CONTINUATION OF THIS LINE OF THOUGHT IS THAT ONLY SECRETS WORTH KEEPING IN NEW ZEALAND ARE THOSE WHICH ORIGINATEFROM ANZUS LINK. THEREFORE, IF NEW ZEALAND WERE TO LEAVE ANZUS SECURITY SERVICE COULD BE DISBANDED.

4. ALTHOUGH COURT, AT TIME OF TRIAL, ORDERED SUPPRESSION OF NAMES OF SIS AGENTS TESTIFYING AGAINST SUTCH, LEFT HAS ANNOUNCED ITS INTENTION OF RELEASING THE NAMES OF AGENTS ON ONE-A-WEEK BASIS. FIRST NAME WAS ANNOUNCED ON TALK-BACK PROGRAM ON PRIVATELY OWNED RADIO STATION FEB 24. INDIVIDUAL WHO GAVE OUT NAME AND PROGRAM HOST HAVE BOTH BEEN CITED FOR CONTEMPT OF COURT. THEIR CASES WILL BE HEARD FEB 28.

5. MOST INTERSTING DEVELOPMENT SINCE TRIAL HAS BEEN DR. SUTCH'S APPEARANCE ON NATIONWIDE CURRENT EVENTS TELEVISION PROGRAM FEB 26. SUTCH ACKNOWLEDGED BASIC FACTS OF CASE, BUT GENERALLY STUCK TO HIS STORY THAT HIS PURPOSE IN MEETING WITH RAZGOVOROV WAS TO DISCUSS THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT IN NEW ZEALAND. HE SAID THAT AFTER THE FIRST MEETINGS HE THOUGHT RAZGOVOROV WANTED TO DEFECT. LATER ON IN PROGRAM SUTCH NOTED THAT SIS AGENTS TALKED TO RAZGOVOROV FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR ON THE NIGHT HE (SUTCH) WAS ARRESTED. SUTCH THEN TOSSED OUT CANARD THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO RAZGOVOROV AND SUGGESTED HE HAD DEFECTED TO SIS. (RAZGOVOROV LEFT NEW ZEALAND FOR MOSCOW OCTOBER 12.) ASKED WHY THE MEETINGS ALWAYS CONFIDENTIAL

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TOOK PLACE OUTSIDE, SUTCH SAID HE WAS UNDER DOCTOR'S ORDERS TO GET LOTS OF EXERCISE AND HE UNDERSTOOD THAT RUSSIANS DID NOT LIKE MEETING INDOORS. IN INTERESTING TURN, SUTCH GAVE SIS A PAT ON THE BACK FOR DOING ITS WORK WELL. MOST VIEWERS WERE LEFT WITH FEELING THAT SUCH IS EITHER INCREDIBLE FOOL OR COMPLETE CHARLATAN. COMMENTING ON SUTCH'S STATEMENT ABOUT DEFECTION ATTORNEY GENERAL FINLAY SAID, "I WAS TAKEN COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE

BY THIS NOVEL SUGGESTION AS, I IMAGINE, WAS EVERYONE ELSE."

6. COMMENT: AFTERSHOCKS OF SUTCH CASE WILL BE FELT FOR SOME TIME. TELEVISION PERFORMANCE WILL SUPPLY OPPOSITION NATIONAL PARTY WITH CONSIDERABLE GRIST FOR POLITICAL MILL WITH NATIONAL LIKELY TO FOCUS ON SUTCH'S TIES WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL MARTYN FINLAY AND MINISTER OF TRADE WARREN FREER. OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT WILL CERTAINLY BE REVIEWED AND SOME CHANGES SEEM ALMOST INEVITABLE. ROLE OF SIS ALSO LIKELY TO BE CLOSELY SCRUTINIZED AND LEFT WILL USE THESE OPPORTUNITIES TO TRY TO EXPOSE NON-EXISTENT CIA AGENTS IN EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY.
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